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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CO](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: BRV DEPORTS TWO DRUG TRAFFICKERS TO U.S.

Classified By: Francisco Fernandez, Political Counselor,
for Reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (SBU) The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (GBRV) turned over Colombian drug traffickers Henry Fortich Coneo and Wilmer Villadiego Coneo to the Drug Enforcement Administration for transport to the United States. National Anti-Drug Office (ONA) Director Nestor Reverol told the local media that the effort "demonstrated international cooperation" in Venezuela's "direct assault on drug trafficking." According to local press reports, the Coneos are cousins that operated a smuggling ring of speed boats that moved cocaine from Colombia's northern coast to islands in the Caribbean and Central America for further trans-shipment to the United States. Local papers quoted Reverol's assertion that the Coneo smuggling ring was involved in the August 2008 murders of seven persons in the Dominican Republic.

¶2. (C) Shortly after the Coneos' October 11 arrest in Zulia state, Reverol pledged to Embassy Caracas DEA that the cousins would be turned over to U.S. authorities as soon as possible. According to mission LEGATT, DEA Caracas coordinated with FBI and ICE, agencies which also had outstanding arrest warrants for the Coneos. With little advance notice, DEA was informed that the Coneos would be ready to travel November 11, causing DEA to scramble for commercial plane reservations.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: According to LEGATT, ONA and other law enforcement groups in Venezuela have stepped up the arrest and rendition of drug traffickers in recent months. The GBRV may be reacting to negative domestic and international opinion regarding Venezuela's role in the war on drugs, as well as possibly trying to put a good foot forward following the U.S. presidential election. End Comment.

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